

**STOCKTON COURTHOUSE FOR THE SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA,
COUNTY OF SAN JOAQUIN:**

Initial Study

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Prepared for:



Judicial Council of California
Administrative Office of the Courts
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) is the staff agency of the Judicial Council of California. The AOC is responsible for implementation of the Trial Court Facilities Act of 2002, landmark legislation that shifts governance of California courthouses from California counties to the State of California. The AOC began negotiations for transfer of responsibility of all trial court facilities from the counties to the State in 2004.

The AOC proposes to construct a new 300,000-square foot courthouse facility containing 30 courtrooms in the City of Stockton for the Superior Court of California, County of San Joaquin (Superior Court). This project would bring the total number of courtrooms in downtown San Bernardino to 30 courtrooms, 8 courtrooms more than the current total. The proposed site is located on City-owned and privately-owned land, adjacent to the existing courthouse complex.

The AOC will act as the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Lead Agency for this project, as discussed further in the following section. Therefore, the AOC is responsible for implementing the CEQA review process for this project, including preparation and adoption of the Initial Study and Environmental Impact Report.

1.1 STATUTORY AUTHORITY AND REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with Government Code Section (§) 70391 and CEQA (Public Resources Code Section 21000-21177) and pursuant to § 15063 of Title 14 of the *California Code of Regulations*, the Judicial Council typically acts as the CEQA Lead Agency for courthouse projects. The Judicial Council has delegated its project approval authority to the Administrative Director of the Courts (ADOC). The ADOC considers a project's potential environmental impacts in its evaluation of the proposal project. If the ADOC finds that there is no evidence that the project (either as proposed or modified to include mitigation measures) may cause a significant effect on the environment, then the ADOC will find that the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment and will adopt a Negative Declaration for the project. Alternatively, if the ADOC finds evidence that any aspect of the proposed project may cause a significant environmental effect (after addition of mitigation measures), the ADOC will determine that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is necessary to analyze project-related and cumulative environmental impacts. The determination to prepare a Mitigated Negative Declaration rather than an EIR can be made only if "there is no substantial evidence in light of the whole record before the Lead Agency" that such impacts may occur (Public Resources Code Section 21080).

1.2 PURPOSE

The purposes of this Initial Study are to:

1. Facilitate environmental assessment early in the design of the project

2. Provide the ADOC with information to use as the basis for deciding whether to prepare an EIR or Negative Declaration
3. Eliminate unnecessary EIRs
4. Enable the AOC to modify the proposed project to mitigate significant environmental impacts in order to avoid preparation of an EIR
5. Provide factual documentation for a Negative Declaration finding that the proposed project will not have a significant environmental effect

§ 15063 of the CEQA Guidelines identifies the following specific disclosure requirements for inclusion in an Initial Study:

1. A description of the project, including the location of the project
2. An identification of the environmental setting
3. An identification of environmental effects by use of a checklist, matrix, or other method, provided that entries on a checklist or other form are briefly explained to indicate that there is some evidence to support the entries
4. A discussion of ways to mitigate any significant effects identified in the Initial Study
5. An examination of whether the project is compatible with existing zoning, plans, and other applicable land-use controls
6. The name of the person or persons who prepared or participated in preparation of the Initial Study

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The AOC proposes to construct a new courthouse in the City of Stockton for the Superior Court of California, County of San Joaquin. The proposed courthouse property is located downtown in Hunter's Square Plaza, immediately west of the existing San Joaquin County Courthouse at 222 East Weber Avenue. The new courthouse building will face Weber Avenue, will be approximately eleven stories tall, and will have approximately 300,000 building gross square feet. The new courthouse will have 30 courtrooms compared to the existing building's 22 courtrooms. The new courthouse will primarily support civil, felony, misdemeanor, juvenile delinquency, and family law functions. The courtrooms will have a secure circulation system to increase courthouse security, and all courtrooms will have holding capability for in-custody detainees to maximize functional flexibility of the courtrooms.

The AOC has also identified an alternative site at Madison and Washington Streets, which is located approximately two miles southwest of the Hunter's Square site. The EIR will also analyze this alternative.

The AOC is responsible for implementation of the Trial Court Facilities Act of 2002, Senate Bill 1732, which requires the transfer of responsibility for funding and operation of trial court facilities from California counties to the State of California. San Joaquin County transferred responsibility for the Stockton Courthouse to the State in 2007. The Superior Court of California, County of San Joaquin (Superior Court) has facilities in the Stockton Courthouse; the Juvenile Justice Center in French Camp; and courthouses in Lodi, Manteca, and Tracy. The Superior Court also recently began operations in the new downtown Stockton Courthouse Annex located at 540 East Main Street. After completion of the proposed new courthouse, the Superior Court will vacate its current space in the County Administration Building and the Stockton Courthouse Annex.

3.0 INITIAL STUDY CHECKLIST

3.1 PROJECT INFORMATION

The proposed project is described in [Section 2.0](#). Specific project information is provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Project Information

1.	Project title: New Stockton Courthouse	
2.	Lead agency name and address:	Administrative Director of the Courts Administrative Office of the Courts 455 Golden Gate Avenue San Francisco, CA 94102-3660
3.	Contact person and phone number:	Jerome Ripperda, Environmental Analyst Administrative Office of the Courts Office of Court Construction and Management 2860 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 400 Sacramento, CA 95833-3509 Phone: (916) 263-8865 Fax: (916) 263-8140 e-mail: Jerry.Ripperda@jud.ca.gov
4.	Project location: The project is in Stockton in San Joaquin County. The project site is at the intersection of Weber Ave. and Hunter St.	
5.	Assessor Parcel Number: 149-020-03, 05, 06, 07, 12, and a portion of APN 149-160-01	
6.	General plan designation: Commercial	
7.	Zoning: Commercial Downtown	
8.	Description of project: Refer to Section 2.0 , Project Description.	
9.	Surrounding land uses and setting: Commercial and government, downtown.	
10.	Other public agencies whose approval is required (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement): The City Council and Redevelopment Authority to approve property transfer to AOC	

3.2 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

This section analyzes the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed project. [Table 3](#) lists the environmental resources evaluated in this Initial Study. The environmental analysis in this section uses a slightly modified version of the CEQA Guidelines' checklist for the environmental review process.¹

¹ The checklist is available at <http://ceres.ca.gov/ceqa/guidelines/pdf/appendix_g-3.pdf>.

Table 3. Environmental Resources Analyzed in This Initial Study

Aesthetics	Land Use Planning
Agricultural Resources	Mineral Resources
Air Quality	Noise
Biological Resources	Population and Housing
Cultural Resources	Public Services
Geology and Soils	Recreation
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	Transportation/Traffic
Hydrology and Water Quality	Utilities and Service Systems

As a preliminary environmental assessment, this Initial Study determines whether potentially significant impacts exist that warrant additional analysis and comprehensive mitigation measures to minimize the level of impact to environmental resources. The assessment analyzes on-site, off-site, long-term, direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts for the construction and operation of the proposed project. For each environmental resource, the Initial Study poses questions with four possible responses for each question:

- **No Impact.** The environmental issue does not apply to the project, and the project will therefore have no environmental impact.
- **Less Than Significant Impact.** The environmental issue does apply to the project site, but the associated impact will be below thresholds that the ADOC considers significant.
- **Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigated.** The project will have the potential to produce significant impacts to the environmental resource. However, mitigation measures modifying the project will reduce environmental impacts to a less-than-significant level.
- **Potentially Significant Impact.** The project will produce significant impacts, and further analysis is necessary.

Table 4 lists the initial evaluation of the proposed project's environmental effects.

Table 4. CEQA Checklist

Environmental Resource	Pot. Significant Impact	Pot. Sig. Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
1. AESTHETICS/VISUAL RESOURCES–Will the project:				
a) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings? <i>The proposed additional buildings along with the proposed elimination of the existing fountain and plaza would alter Downtown Stockton’s visual character, resulting in potentially significant impacts.</i>	X			
b) Have a substantial adverse affect on a scenic vista? <i>The AOC does not expect the proposed project to affect scenic vistas.</i>				X
c) Substantially damage scenic resources? <i>Per above.</i>				X
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare that will adversely affect day or nighttime views? <i>This project will add additional nighttime light and daytime glare, but the impact will be similar to other light sources in the immediate vicinity.</i>			X	
2. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES–Will the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland) to non-agricultural uses? <i>Since the proposed project is in downtown Stockton and is already used for non-agricultural uses, the project will not convert the project site to non-agricultural uses. The Draft EIR will not discuss this issue further.</i>				X
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract? <i>Per above. The Draft EIR will not discuss this issue further.</i>				X
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment, which could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use? <i>Per above. The Draft EIR will not discuss this issue further.</i>				X
3. AIR QUALITY–Will the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan? <i>The AOC does not expect the proposed project to produce population growth. The EIR will evaluate whether the project is consistent with the air quality management plan.</i>		X		

Environmental Resource	Pot. Significant Impact	Pot. Sig. Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation? <i>The proposed project will produce air emissions during construction and from traffic-related sources during operation. Impacts from these emissions could be potentially significant, but the air quality analysis will indicate whether mitigation measures may reduce impacts to less than significant.</i>		X		
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard? <i>Per above.</i>		X		
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations? <i>Per above.</i>		X		
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people? <i>The project will produce odors from construction-related diesel exhaust and courthouse operations traffic, but the AOC does not believe the project will produce odors that will affect a substantial number of people.</i>			X	
f) Conflict with the state goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in California to 1990 levels by 2020, as set forth by the timetable established in Assembly Bill (AB) 32, California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006? <i>The EIR will evaluate the project's conformity with AB 32.</i>		X		
4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES–Will the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)? <i>The proposed project site is a developed area and devoid of habitat (including vegetation, riparian areas, wetlands, etc.) that would support candidate, sensitive, or special status species. Therefore, the AOC believes the project will have no effect. The Draft EIR will not discuss this issue further.</i>				X
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the DFG or USFWS? <i>Per above. The Draft EIR will not discuss this issue further.</i>				X

Environmental Resource	Pot. Significant Impact	Pot. Sig. Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act? <i>Per above. The Draft EIR will not discuss this issue further.</i>				X
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites? <i>Per above. The Draft EIR will not discuss this issue further.</i>				X
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance? <i>Stockton's tree preservation policies protect "heritage trees," which the City defines as any Quercus lobata (Valley Oak) Quercus agrifolia (Coast Live Oak), and Quercus wislizenii (Interior Live Oak) that have a trunk diameter of at least 16 inches. The proposed project will remove several trees, but there are no "heritage trees" on the project site. Therefore, the project will not have an impact on biological resources protected by local policies or ordinances.</i>				X
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan? <i>There are no conservation plans encompassing the project site. The project site is currently a parking area and a plaza, and it is within the "No Pay" classification area of the San Joaquin Multi-Species Habitat Conservation and Open Space Plan. The project will not produce population growth, and will not provide infrastructure that will induce population growth. Therefore, the project will have no impacts.</i>				X
5. CULTURAL RESOURCES–Will the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource as defined in Section 15064.5? <i>The project could result in significant impacts to resources in Hunters Square, and it may not be possible to mitigate the impacts to a less-than-significant level.</i>	X			
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5? <i>The project may cause significant impacts to resources in Hunters Square, but it may be possible to mitigate the impacts to a less-than-significant level. Pre- construction excavations would be needed in order to identify and avoid impacts to resources should they be present.</i>		X		
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries? <i>Per above.</i>		X		

Environmental Resource	Pot. Significant Impact	Pot. Sig. Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
6. GEOLOGY AND SOILS–Will the project:				
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects involving rupture of a known earthquake fault? <i>Potential fault rupture is not indicated. Additional confirmation would be provided during the course of environmental review.</i>			X	
b) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects involving strong seismic ground shaking? <i>The project site's proximity to active fault zones indicates a potential for ground shaking.</i>		X		
c) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects involving ground failure (including subsidence or liquefaction-induced lateral spreading)? <i>The project area may be subject to ground failure (including liquefaction) and may require mitigation in order to reduce potential impacts to below a significant level.</i>		X		
d) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects involving landslides? <i>Due to the flat terrain at the site, the AOC believes that landslides are not a concern at the project site. EIR will not discuss this issue any further.</i>				X
e) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects involving soil erosion or the loss of topsoil? <i>The site is flat and developed, and it is predominately either paved or covered with landscaping. Water from the site drains into municipal drains. Since the project will cover exposed soil and will not produce substantial amounts of runoff sheet flow that could cause erosion, the AOC believes that the project will not cause substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil. Therefore, there will be no impact, and the EIR will not discuss this issue further.</i>				X
f) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects involving expansive soil? <i>The EIR will evaluate this issue.</i>		X		
g) Destroy a unique geological feature? <i>The site is flat, developed, and has no unique geological feature; the EIR will not evaluate this issue further.</i>				X
h) Destroy a unique paleontological resource or site? <i>The project may cause significant impacts to resources in Hunters Square, but it may be possible to mitigate the impacts to a less-than-significant level. Pre- construction excavations would be needed in order to identify and avoid impacts to resources should they be present.</i>		X		

Environmental Resource	Pot. Significant Impact	Pot. Sig. Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
7. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS–Will the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, emission, or disposal of hazardous materials? <i>The project does not involve the production, transport, emission, or use of any significant quantities of hazardous materials and, therefore, no impacts would result. The Draft EIR will not discuss this issue further.</i>				X
b) Be located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, will it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment? <i>Per above. The Draft EIR will not discuss this issue further.</i>				X
c) Result in a safety hazard in the vicinity of an airport or airstrip for people visiting or working in the project area? <i>The AOC is not aware of airport-related safety issues for the proposed project. The AOC will assume potential impacts exist, pending review of such plans.</i>		X		
d) Impair implementation of an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan or physically interfere with emergency plans? <i>Since the project will not create barriers, it will not interfere with any emergency plans, there will be no impact. The EIR will not discuss this issue further.</i>				X
e) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires? <i>Project is located in a developed urban area, and it is not subject to wildland fires. The EIR will not discuss this issue further.</i>				X
8. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY–Will the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements? <i>The project would result in stormwater discharges that would expected to be controlled via acceptable stormwater management plans for construction and operation. Mitigation measure would be required to ensure such plans are effective and appropriately implemented.</i>		X		

Environmental Resource	Pot. Significant Impact	Pot. Sig. Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<p>b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge so that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level?</p> <p><i>The project site is already developed, and since the proposed courthouse will cover less than one acre of ground, the proposed new courthouse will not substantially interfere with groundwater recharge. The AOC believes that the project will not produce substantial population growth. Therefore, the project will not have impacts on groundwater supplies or groundwater surface levels. The EIR will not discuss this issue further.</i></p>				X
<p>c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner that will result in substantial erosion or siltation on site or off site?</p> <p><i>Stream or river drainage courses are not present and would not otherwise be affected. The site is flat and is either paved or covered with landscaping. Water from the site flows into municipal storm water drains. Since the project will not affect site drainage and will repave or re-landscape the site, there will be no impact. The EIR will not discuss this issue further.</i></p>				X
<p>d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding on site or off site?</p> <p><i>Stream or river drainage courses are not present and would not otherwise be affected. The site is flat, and water from the site drains into municipal drains. Since the project will not affect site drainage, there will be no impact. The EIR will not discuss this issue further</i></p>				X
<p>e) Create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?</p> <p><i>Although the site is already developed as a parking area and plaza, the proposed new courthouse may contribute additional runoff.</i></p>		X		
<p>f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?</p> <p><i>Water quality would not be impaired beyond the potential impacts discussed above.</i></p>				X
<p>g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area, as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?</p> <p><i>The project does not involve housing. The EIR will not discuss this issue further.</i></p>				X

Environmental Resource	Pot. Significant Impact	Pot. Sig. Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures that would impede or redirect flood flows? <i>The project is not within the 100-year floodplain. The EIR will not discuss this issue further.</i>				X
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam? <i>The project site is not adjacent to a stream, river, or lake that could inundate the site, and no levees or dams protect the site. The project site is on flat terrain, and the site is above sea level. Therefore, the AOC believes the site is not subject to a significant risk of flooding. The EIR will not discuss this issue further.</i>			X	
j) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow? <i>The project site is approximately 20 miles east of the extreme eastern end of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta; therefore, the project site is not subject to a seiche or tsunami. The project site is on flat terrain, therefore there is no risk of a mudflow. Therefore, the AOC believes the site is not subject to a significant risk of inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow. The EIR will not discuss this issue further.</i>				X
9. LAND USE AND PLANNING—Will the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community? <i>The proposed project covers only a small area (approximately one acre) and would not divide any communities. The EIR will not discuss this issue further.</i>				X
b) Conflict with any applicable land-use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect? <i>The project is consistent with the City of Stockton General Plan Land Use designation of “Commercial” for the project site. However, an in-depth policy review has yet to be conducted. While policy conflicts are not anticipated, a detailed review of all relevant plans and policies will need to be conducted in order to confirm a lack of environmentally related policy conflicts.</i>		X		
10. MINERAL RESOURCES—Will the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state? <i>Minerals are not available at the proposed site. The EIR will not discuss this issue further.</i>			X	

Environmental Resource	Pot. Significant Impact	Pot. Sig. Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land-use plan? <i>Per above. The EIR will not discuss this issue further.</i>				X
11. NOISE—Will the project result in:				
a) Generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies? <i>The project may exceed noise standards in the absence of mitigation. A Noise Study is being undertaken in order to further characterize noise sources, potential impacts, and local plan or policy implications.</i>	X			
b) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project? <i>Some permanent noise increases may result from increased court-related traffic noise, but impacts will not be substantial and would be less than significant.</i>			X	
c) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project? <i>Construction activity impacts could be significant, although possibly mitigable.</i>	X			
d) Generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels? <i>Vibration impacts from pile driving could be significant, depending upon design measures that are employed and proximity to existing businesses, offices, and sensitive receptors.</i>		X		
12. POPULATION AND HOUSING – Will the project:				
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)? <i>The project does not include housing or add infrastructure that would indirectly induce construction of additional housing. Therefore, the project will have no impact. The EIR will not discuss this issue further.</i>				X
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? <i>Per above. The EIR will not discuss this issue further.</i>				X
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? <i>Per above. The EIR will not discuss this issue further.</i>				X

Environmental Resource	Pot. Significant Impact	Pot. Sig. Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
13. PUBLIC SERVICES – Will the project:				
a) Result in substantial impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for Fire protection services? <i>The project is proposed in Downtown Stockton, an area efficiently served by existing governmental facilities.</i>				X
b) Result in substantial impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for police protection services? <i>The project is proposed in Downtown Stockton, an area efficiently served by existing governmental facilities. The courthouse will require additional police services; however the new courthouse project makes allowances and provides for such an increase and associated support.</i>			X	
c) Result in substantial impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for schools, parks, or other public facilities? <i>As previously stated, the project includes no new housing. Therefore, the project would not have a significant effect upon schools, or most other facilities associated with housing development. The EIR will not discuss this issue further.</i>				X
14. RECREATION – Will the project:				
a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated? <i>Potential impacts on the plaza and fountain would have a potential unavoidable significant impact on open space and recreational resources.</i>	X			
b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment? <i>As previously noted, no housing is proposed and thus demand for recreational facilities would be limited.</i>				X
15. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC–Will the project:				
a) Cause an increase in traffic that is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system? <i>Conclusions regarding traffic impacts are pending results of further analysis as part of the project's traffic study. Until then, a conservative assumption of potential impacts is applied.</i>		X		

Environmental Resource	Pot. Significant Impact	Pot. Sig. Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Exceed a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways? <i>Per above.</i>		X		
c) Produce a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks? <i>The Stockton Airport is approximately four miles southeast of the proposed courthouse site. Impacts to air traffic patterns are not anticipated.</i>			X	
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)? <i>The AOC does not anticipate a substantial increase in hazards due to a design feature or incompatible uses.</i>			X	
e) Result in inadequate emergency access? <i>The AOC does not anticipate the project to result in inadequate emergency access.</i>			X	
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity? <i>Existing Downtown parking appears adequate, but the EIR will analyze parking resources.</i>			X	
g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)? <i>The project proposes development of a parking area and open space area. It will not obstruct public transit routes or add features that conflict with alternative transportation resources.</i>			X	
16. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS–Will the project:				
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board? <i>The project does not include housing or add infrastructure that would indirectly induce construction of additional housing. The AOC is not aware of pending or projected capacity, compliance, or operational issues with the municipal wastewater treatment facility that would serve the proposed project. Therefore, potential impacts must be assumed pending review of such plans.</i>		X		

Environmental Resource	Pot. Significant Impact	Pot. Sig. Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<p>b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?</p> <p><i>The project does not include housing or add infrastructure that would indirectly induce construction of additional housing. The AOC is not aware of pending or projected capacity, compliance, or operational issues with the municipal wastewater treatment facility that would serve the proposed project. Therefore, potential impacts must be assumed pending review of such plans.</i></p>		X		
<p>c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?</p> <p><i>The AOC does not anticipate this result since the facilities are proposed in Downtown Stockton, which is served by ample infrastructure.</i></p>				X
<p>d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?</p> <p><i>The project does not include housing or add infrastructure that would indirectly induce construction of additional housing. A potential impact is being assumed pending further evaluation.</i></p>		X		
<p>e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?</p> <p><i>The project would not generate significant quantities of wastewater relative to other types of development. Therefore, wastewater treatment capacity would not appear to be a project constraint.</i></p>			X	
<p>f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?</p> <p><i>The project would not generate significant quantities of solid waste relative to residential and some other types of commercial businesses. Therefore, the project is unlikely to significantly affect landfill capacity. The project could, however, result in long-term cumulative impacts to landfill capacity, depending upon population forecasts and landfill capacity projections. The EIR will examine this issue in further detail. Mitigation is available to minimize the project's solid waste generation potential.</i></p>			X	
17. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE—Will the project:				

Environmental Resource	Pot. Significant Impact	Pot. Sig. Impact Unless Mitigated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have the potential to substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, or reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal? <i>Biological impacts would not result from the proposed project.</i>				X
b) Have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory? <i>Potential impacts to historical resources may result, which may or may not be fully mitigated. Cumulative environmental impacts could contribute to significant impacts in the absence of adequate mitigation measures.</i>		X		
c) Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.) <i>Per above. In addition, cumulative impacts to water quality and future landfill capacity may be cumulatively significant absent implementation of adequate mitigation.</i>		X		
d) Have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly? <i>Per “b” above.</i>		X		

4.0 REPORT PREPARATION PERSONNEL

Administrative Office of the Courts

Senior Project Manager:

Steve Sundman

Environmental Analyst:

Jerome J. Ripperda

Tetra Tech

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Technical Advisor:

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5.0 LEAD AGENCY DETERMINATION

5.1 DETERMINATION

Based on the initial study checklist (Table 4) above and related analyses included within:

- ☐ I find that the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment, and the ADOC will prepare a Negative Declaration for the project.
- ☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect on the environment because the ADOC has added mitigation measures that will reduce the project's impacts to a level that are not significant, and the ADOC will prepare a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the project.
- ☒ I find that the proposed project may have a significant impact on the environment, and the AOC will prepare an Environmental Impact Report for the project.
- ☐ I find that the proposed project may have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect (1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and (2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An Environmental Impact Report is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- ☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, all potentially significant effects have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and all potentially significant effects have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project. Therefore, nothing further is required.

5.2 CERTIFICATION

I certify that the statements furnished above and in the attached sections present the data and information required for this initial evaluation to the best of my ability, and that the facts, statements, and information presented are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.



Signature

7-17-2008

Date

Jerome J. Ripperda

Printed Name

Administrative Office of the Courts

For